

STATEMENT ON "THE BAY OF PIGS" BY HAYNES JOHNSON

(The following statement is to be used internally and in off-the-record discussions with individuals outside the Agency, particularly members of Congress)

The Haynes Johnson book on the Bay of Pigs done in collaboration with the four leaders of the Brigade, referred to as Brigade 2506, is basically the Brigade's story of the Bay of Pigs. It also devotes a considerable portion to the efforts to free the Brigade starting with the Castro proposal to exchange tractors for the Brigade and concluding with the actual exchange.

The author has done considerable research on this book and has had considerable assistance on certain portions. He undoubtedly has discussed not only the exchange of the prisoners with all of the pertinent people concerned but probably has also interviewed many people who were involved in the original plans for the landing and the landing itself.

The author did not consult the CIA. If he had it is unlikely the Agency would have made any comment. The principal allegations against CIA in the book are that Agency personnel allegedly told the Cubans to go ahead and land even if Washington canceled the operations and that there would be help coming. While it is difficult to ascertain through facts of who said what in a situation of extreme tension, particularly now that memories have been affected on one side by years of imprisonment and on the other by years of controversy, the principal U. S. concerned categorically denies that he had ever told the Cubans to ignore cancellation orders. The same would apply to the allegations that they would be supported by additional forces of the U. S. military.

Other critical comments in the book concerning the CIA revolve around alleged miscalculations concerning Castro were their ground forces, page 223: "Castro's army was far stronger and fought more fiercely than anyone had anticipated. Consequently, the Brigade would have needed many more men--perhaps ten thousand, perhaps twenty thousand--to accomplish its mission. Added to this was the erroneous belief the Brigade B-26s would control the air and enable the men to operate at will on the ground. Another miscalculation was obvious: there had been no uprising, no mass defections from Castro's forces. And the CIA's alternative plan for the Brigade had not been employed."

The author then goes on to say that none of the Cubans knew anything about the Agency's plan to disperse for guerrilla warfare in the Escambray Mountains and that the operations which started out as a clandestine covert action changed to a full-fledged overt military campaign. The author concludes that the Bay of Pigs was a classic tragedy of good intention and finally the responsibility must rest with the CIA. He adds that the CIA is necessary to the survival of the United States and alleges that CIA men in the Field tended to take matters into their own hands.

It may be some time before we can categorically state that the intelligence on the landing was either inadequate or accurate. It is significant to note that Castro himself indicated that the landing came close to succeeding and expressed admiration for the plan. What the Agency can state categorically is that no one to the best of our knowledge violated orders or acted without proper authorization.

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